

SIMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
REFORMER 275

in his prime he had evinced much energy of disposition,
and in difficult moments had relied on his own sound common-sense. But he was now sixty-eight years old, and though he was still of most industrious habits, the strenuous life he had led had left its mark upon him. Moreover, a complaint from which he suffered had taken a very serious turn, and frequent physical suffering was not conducive to perspicuity and energy of mind. Again, there was the position of his business to be considered. In consequence of the prosecution and the misrepresentations of the newspapers, the trade became afraid to handle any books he published, and thus his sales rapidly decreased. Besides, he found it difficult to obtain efficient counsel for his trial. The Parnell Commission was then sitting, and most of the great men of the bar were retained in it. Mr. (now Sir Robert) Finlay, Q. O., who was applied to, could not take the brief, having in hand already a large number, which the barristers engaged before the commission had been obliged to decline. Other men were similarly circumstanced, and there was one who honestly admitted that he did not like the case, and would therefore prove a very poor advocate. Eventually Mr. Francis B. Williams, Q. O., Recorder

of Cardiff, was retained, with Mr. A. R. Oler, now a London police magistrate, as his junior.

Beset as he was by various friends, who held that in the state of public opinion he was not likely to secure an acquittal, Vizetelly at last allowed some inquiries to be made as to what would happen if he pleaded guilty and withdrew the three incriminated Zola translations, such as they were then, from circulation. A letter bearing on this question, says : " If the rest of Zola's works that are open